

Be sure to get your comments into the record before the public hearing is closed. Once the hearing closes, discussion by the Planning Commission is limited to the Planning Commission, staff and legal counsel. No further public participation can occur unless the public hearing is formally reopened by the chair.

**What Happens After The
Hearing Is Closed?**

- ♦ The Planning Commission will deliberate upon the application and will either reach a decision, continue the application to another date, or table the application. In some situations, rezoning and text amendment applications, the Planning Commission will make a recommendation for approval or denial to the City Council. This recommendation may contain restrictive conditions, such as limiting a rezoning to certain types of development. The application will then be scheduled for a public hearing before the Council, and the public will be given the opportunity to participate in the public hearing process at the Council level before the final decision is made.

**Keeping the “Public” In Public
Hearings...**

- Your involvement in the public hearing process is much appreciated, and is critical to facilitating good public decisions that affect the future of the City of Madison.

The Planning Commission and staff thank you for getting involved!

Additional Information

Please visit the City’s website at www.ci.madison.al.us to view the following:

Zoning Ordinance
Subdivision Regulations
Subdivision and Zoning applications
Construction Specifications
Submittal Process
Fees
GIS Map Section

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**City of Madison
Planning
Commission**

***Public
Hearings:***

**A Helpful Guide
to
Presenting your
Views...**

WHAT IS A PUBLIC HEARING?

A public hearing is an opportunity for the public to hear and respond to land use applications. Types of applications that require a public hearing include rezonings, subdivisions, zoning and subdivision regulation text amendments, and Comprehensive Plan changes.

What Is The Public Hearing Procedure?

Public hearings *generally* proceed in the following manner:

1. Short introduction of agenda item by Chair;
2. Questions by Planning Commission of the staff and applicant;
3. Open public comment period;
4. Acknowledgement of written comments received;
5. Questions by the Planning Commission of applicant and technical representative(s);
6. Close public comment period;
7. Deliberation on the application by the Planning Commission based upon applicable standards;
8. Final decision or recommendation.

How Can I be a Better Public Hearing Participant?

- ♦ First of all, every citizen has a right to be heard. So, forget your fears and lack of experience speaking in public and communicate your concerns and questions. Make notes, and don't hesitate to read from them if necessary.
- ♦ Become informed. Learn about the application being considered. Applications and associated documents may be reviewed in the Department of Planning, Engineering and Building, during normal business hours. Pertinent information that is typically available includes the application, a description of the proposal, site plans and drawings, environmental studies, etc. A copy of the staff report which includes a summary of the proposed action, applicable standards, and staff comments is available upon request. The agenda may be viewed at the City website at www.ci.madison.al.us.
- ♦ Remember that a public hearing has two purposes. The obvious one is for the Planning Commission to hear the public's opinion about the land use applications that it is considering. The other is to gather

information about the application that it does not already have. Your participation is most valuable when you can provide this type of input.

- ♦ You may participate in the public hearing process by either submitting written comments, testifying at the public hearing or both! You are encouraged to relate your written comments and oral testimony to the standards of evaluation pertinent to the application. Comments should be directed to the Chair and be concise. Where possible, solutions to potential problems should be offered. Written comments may be provided to the Department of Planning, Engineering and Building prior to the public hearing, either by fax, e-mail or regular mail. The Department's contact information can be found at back of brochure.
- ♦ Written comments are most effective when the members of the Planning Commission have time to thoroughly review them prior to the meeting, so you are encouraged to submit them as soon as possible. Written comments in excess of one (1) page, including attachments, are encouraged to be submitted at least one (1) week in advance of the meeting.

- ♦ Attend the public hearing and provide oral testimony. If you are part of a larger group that supports the same point of view, consider designating one or two people to express the concerns of the group.
- ♦ Keep in mind that the time allotted to individual oral comments during the hearing may be limited at the discretion of the Chair, taking into account the number of people wishing to testify and the available agenda time.
- ♦ Comment cards are available at the meeting for those of you who wish to attend but may be a little uncomfortable about speaking in front of a group. Just fill it out with your thoughts, turn the card in to either the staff or Chair, and your comments will be read into the record for you.
- ♦ All applications coming before the Planning Commission are initiated by a landowner or developer, not by the City (with very rare exceptions), and the Planning Commission does not prejudge them or make any decisions before hearing the public's input.